

The first words the brave boy uttered were : " Oh ! Pshaw ! you are not going to be captured ; the boys back there will not let them capture you. They can't come out of their fort, for General McComb has brought up all the artillery possible, and will open on them if they show themselves ; but he says we must stay here until night ! "

Well, we stayed there all day, and that day was four years long. But night came at last — it always does, and you should have seen how the boys crawled out of their holes. And when we got within our works you should have heard that rebel yell !

And what do you think they told us when we got back — and don't you think we should have felt complimented ? Well, it seems that when General McComb learned that our little battalion alone had succeeded in carrying that part of the line assigned to them, and that the rest of the attack was a failure, he was much worried. When daylight showed him our dangerous position he at once sent for General Harry Heth (who, by the by, was in command at the time of A. P. Hill's Corps), and upon that General's arrival McComb pointed out the situation in which we were placed. General Heth at once expressed his determination to prevent the capture of the battalion, saying : " Those men are too gallant to allow of it," and he ordered up three batteries to be brought to cover that portion of the picket line we occupied, or, you might say, the rifle pits. These were the guns we had seen, for we had left no artillery in the works.

That we were sleepy, you can rest assured, after our experience, and our sleep was long and restful.

But this detention in the rifle pits all day brought about a disaster that the Second Maryland could ill afford in its then depleted condition. Lieutenant Thomas Tolson had been sent out on picket the day before with thirty-two men. Captain Torsch from his position in the rifle pits could not recall him, as was his intention, and by an attack by the enemy in force Tolson and his command were captured.

At daylight on the morning of April 2, 1865, the battalion was ordered to form. There was an indescribable something in everyone's presence that portended of evil. What could it be ? It was true, the soldiers of Lee's army had revolved the situation in their minds more than once, but then as long as " Mar's Bob " was there all seemed right. But " Mar's Bob " could not build up armies without material, and, alas ! that once glorious army was fast dwindling away through desertion and casualties.

It seemed to those devoted troops that second day of April morning that the whole Federal Army had been let loose. Everywhere was heard the roar of artillery and the rattle of musketry. That handful of men composing the Army of Northern Virginia was now but a pigmy battling with a giant ; and still that pigmy had not been of much greater proportions for many months, and yet the giant had not before ventured an attack along the line. But the end was fast approaching, and the end was as glorious as the beginning.